

BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF INDIAN SEMI-URBAN WOMEN FOR PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to examine buying behavior of females and their preference towards Personal care product in Semi-urban areas of Madhya Pradesh. In this research main focus was given on the variables that affect the consumption of personal care product by the female as well as the factors that affect their decision-making process for purchasing the personal care products. In this research, the women respondents from semi urban areas were chosen for the study. For conducting the study data was collected from the female with a minimum age of 18 years. This study also helps various marketers for formulating various strategies for selling personal care products to women belonging to semi-urban location. Primary data was obtained through the questionnaire. The results were analyzed through SPSS version 18.

KEYWORDS: Personal Care Products, Women Buying & Consumption Patterns

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INTRODUCTION

Women view buying as a fun, satisfying and joyful activity. The female attitude towards buying seems very positive and they look forward to this with cheerful prospects. Personal care is an important part of women's life and plays an impressive role in building the identity of women. Personal care products are usually mixtures of chemical compounds or organic ingredients. Some of these products using a blend of functional additives found around us for decades and many of these products are simply variations on the existing theme.

All important experiences of women while buying and its importance create a constant demand for Personal care Products which gives this market a great potential for growth and expansion. There are many factors which cause-impact on the buying of females like need, style, rising income, concern for a self, wide variety of products and multiple brands available in the market.

Today women have a lot of interest regarding Personal hygiene and she is having awareness about these product attributes with respect to Personal care also. The marketers of the Personal care companies need to understand their attitude on Personal care Products buying behavior which brings success and improved market share to the company. The researcher of this study focuses on the factors that affect the buying decisions of women in order to get reliable and valid results that help the company for focusing on future marketing strategies.

We know that a segment of women today moves towards the career and also there is a large portion of women who prefer to stay at home and shoulder the responsibility of managing home. The lifestyle of this group

differs from that of working women. The attitude, perception and habits and even the brands and products they prefer, along with the process of making a purchase decision, are different between the working woman and homemaker.

According to the HPIC market opportunity report, Indian Personal care product market is observing different trends for different users. On the one hand, there are urban customers whose needs are evolving and require customization of the product offering. On the other hand, the penetration of these products is increasing in the rural market but their price sensitivity requires cost-effective product offerings. India is a diverse market with urban, semi-urban and rural consumers. Not only in urban but also in semi-urban areas the popularity of these products is increasing, as the women in rural and Semi-urban areas try themselves to look like their urban counterparts.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As per the latest researches, the global Cosmetic market was 460 billion USD in 2014 and is estimated to reach 675 billion USD by 2020 growing at a rate of 6.4% and as of the cosmetic products, Skincare has the highest market share compared to Oral Cosmetics would be the fastest growing market during the forecasted period under this study.

(Haque, 2016) The personal care products we use in one way indicate our lifestyles and standards of living. From soaps, toiletries, oral care, and shampoos, face creams in the morning and sunscreen products in summers to moisturizing lotions in winters, all these personal care products literally are part of our daily lives. The young and students community today are much more health and beauty conscious. The common perception amongst the young student's group is that the use of personal care products may help them to groom up their look and style and psychological association with their dream celebrities to follow and admire. They use the maximum of personal care products and thus become the most interesting and important target group for the marketers.

According to an article by Fona International, "Women represent the largest market opportunity in the world. Women handle the bulk of purchasing decisions for everyday items even for those items targeted at men".

As Jeff Falk mentioned in *GCI* magazine (2009) that, "Women are more emotional in terms of their product purchasing habits, whereas men are drawn to technical, functional things".

The Indian middle class is growing rapidly and so is its demand for the best quality products. Today they want to use international brands whether they are mass market or premium" (*Bhattacharya, 2007*).

(Lawson & Gilman, 2015) Women's spending priorities differ from men's, with women particularly more likely to buy goods and services that improve the family's welfare. Thus, as women gain decision-making power, household spending patterns are likely to shift.

A. Sudhakar and T. Suchitra Rani (2012) conducted a study and from the study, it was found that family influences purchase decision of different categories of beauty soaps, fairness creams, shampoo, henna, hair oil, and kajal brands. However, friends were found to be the main influencing social factors in the purchase of face wash, eyeliner, and nail paint brand.

According to (Steven & Hubert) "In many densely populated regions, a clear distinction between "urban" and "rural" is not possible anymore: areas containing complex properties of urbanized areas as well as the "open space" land use of land cover categories (agricultural and natural). Determining and monitoring these hybrid and dynamic landscapes forms a major challenge. This publication is a summary of the state-of-the-art concepts proposed to describe and study

those areas or landscapes not rural nor urban (Meeus & Gulinck, 2008)

(Nair & Pillai, 8-10 April 2007) Main reasons for the boom in the cosmetic industry as increasing fashion and beauty consciousness coupled with rising incomes and focus on health and fitness. To complement this, beauty culture or cosmetology has emerged as a major occupational avenue with significant commercial potential. New scientific developments, techniques, products and media hype, has contributed the Indian fashion industry in generating mega revenues and this has in turn added to the growth of the cosmetic industry.

Vinith Kumar Nair. Prakash Pillai R (2007) observed that male and female consumers generally prefer to purchase and make the brand selection of cosmetics individually. Quality is the major factor influencing the purchase decision of male consumers. It also reveals that one of the main sources of information among the females about different brands of cosmetics is friends group.

Prialatha, P.; Mathi, K. Malar conducted a study in the Coimbatore district. The study intends to identify the level of influence of various factors on the purchase of personal care products by rural consumers. The study shows that rural consumers give more importance to the 'quality' of the personal care brands they buy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted by administering the structured questionnaire for collecting primary data. It was considered to be the most effective method for studying women's buying behavior as regards personal care products. And secondary data has been taken from various sources like reference books, academic journals were consulted to determine the existing level of knowledge about consumer buying behavior, internet, newspaper, magazines were used to through light on the different aspect of women buying. The population for this research study consists of women using personal care products. The sampling unit is the individual consumer of personal care products sample size is 500 women living in semi-urban areas of Madhya Pradesh and the sample was selected by a non-probability convenience sampling method. The analysis was done through SPSS version 18 and the statistical tools used are bar charts and pie charts.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the various factors affecting buying decision of women for personal care products in semi-urban areas.
- To identify the preferred personal care product category among women of semi-urban areas.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Factors Affecting the Buying Decision

This research has taken certain measures to identify factors that affect buying decision of women for Personal Care Product that may range from consumption Behaviour to their level of agreement towards keeping in view the specific aim to ascertain factors.

Consumption Influencing Factors

It is found from various studies that some factors influence the consumption of personal care products by women respondents. These factors are shown in below table and the respondents were asked to tick the factor that according to them what influence the consumption of personal care products. Seven such factors identified in this regard and responses were recorded on multiple tick option.

Table 1: Consumption Influencing Factors

Factors Influencing Consumption		N	Percent
Changing Life Style		294	28.6%
Media Exposure		98	9.5%
Increase in Disposable Income		69	6.7%
Previous Experience		259	25.2%
Easy Availability Of Wide Range of Personal Care Product		198	19.3%
Corporate Culture		109	10.6%
Total		1027	100.0%

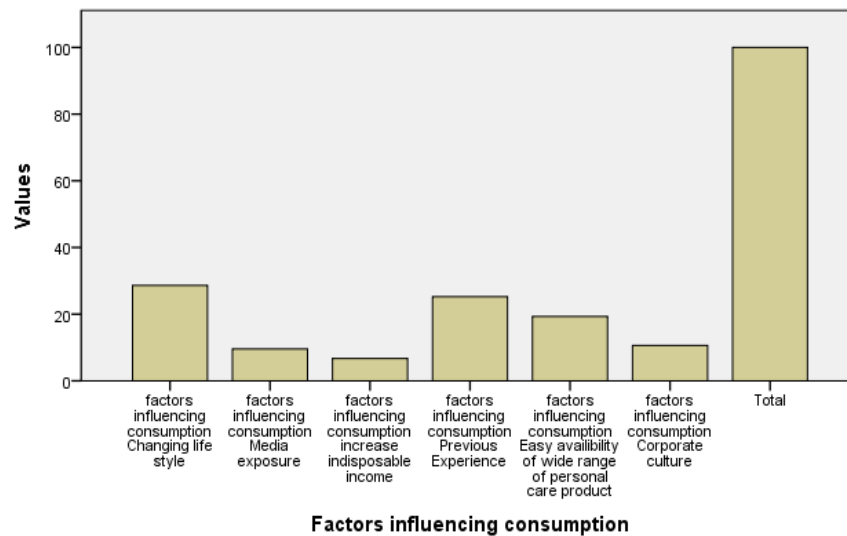
**\$consumption Frequencies
Responses Percent****Graph 1: Percentage Showing Factors Influencing Consumption**

Table 1 shows that 294 respondents (28.6%) percent of the female are using the Personal Care products due to changing lifestyle. While 259(25.2%) women were consuming it because of some previous experience associated with that product. Easy availability of wide range of Personal care products is another factor for its consumption as 198(19.3%) women responded. Corporate culture is the fourth-factor influencing consumption that is 109(10.6%). 98(9.5%) women said media exposure and 69(6.7%) said due to increase in disposable income they were consuming Personal care Products.

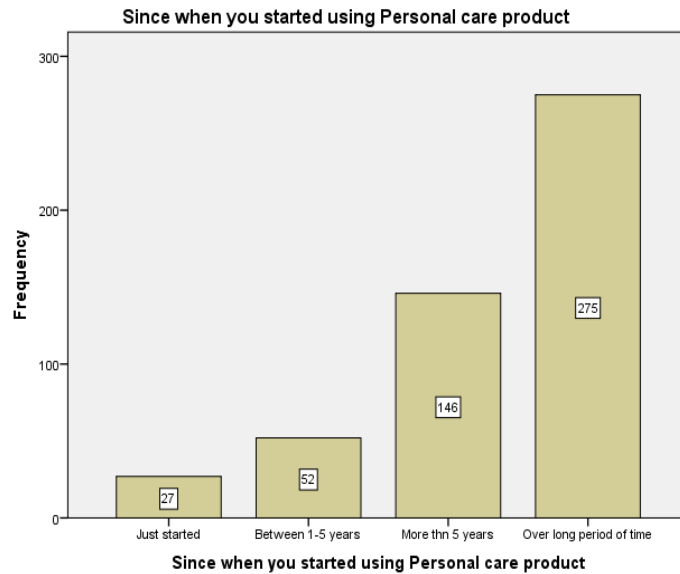
Thus, it is clear that Changing Lifestyle and Previous Experience regarding products contributed maximum towards the consumption of Personal care Products by women respondents.

Duration of using Personal Care Products

Next question in this research is focused to find out the duration since when the respondents are using personal care products. In these four options were there like just started, between 1 -5 years, more than 5 years and over a long period of time option were given.

Table 2: Duration since using Personal Care Product by the Respondents

Duration of Using Personal Care Product	Frequency	Percent
Just started	27	5.4
Between 1-5 years	52	10.4
More than 5 years	146	29.2
Over long period of time	275	55.0
Total	500	100.0



Graph 2: Duration since using Personal Care Product by the Respondents

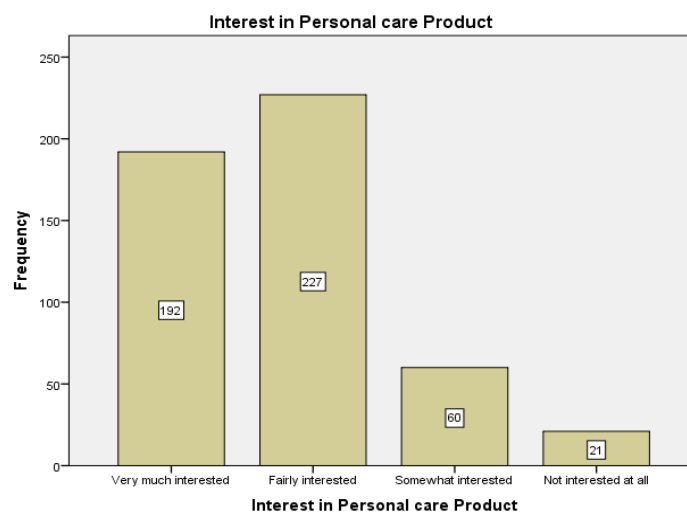
Table 2 exhibits that 55% women purchase Personal care Products over the long period of time. 29.2% of women purchase Personal care Products from last 5 years. 10.4% of women purchase Personal care Products between 1-5 years. And only 5.4% of women recently purchase Personal care Products.

Interest in Personal Care Product

In many studies, it is seen that the interest of women varies in personal care product. So to check the same the respondents have been asked for their interest in personal care product.

Table 3: Interest in Personal Care Product

Interest	Frequency	Percent
Very much interested	192	38.4
Fairly interested	227	45.4
Somewhat interested	60	12.0
Not interested at all	21	4.2
Total	500	100.0



Graph 3: Interest in Personal Care Product

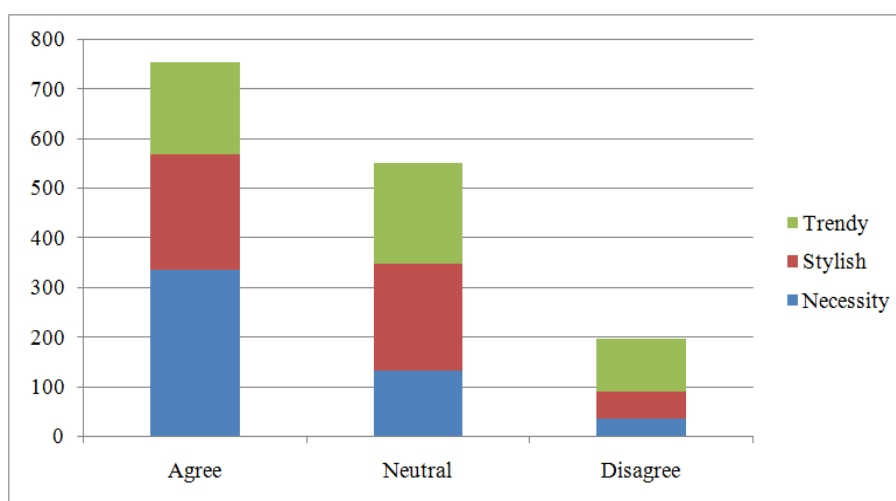
Table 3 shows that 192(38.4%) women are very much interested in Personal Care Product. 227(45.4%) women were fairly interested in Personal Care Product. 60(12%) women are somewhat interested in Personal Care Product. Only 21(4.2%) women are not interested in Personal Care Product

Level of Agreement Regarding the Importance of Personal Care Products

It was found in the literature review that perception of women regarding personal care product varies according to her personal characteristics. So her level of agreement on different parameters was identified that is Necessity, stylish and Trendy. And women were asked to respond in 3 point scale from 1 as agree to 3 as disagree.

Table 4: Level of Agreement regarding Importance of Personal Care Products

	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		N	Mean
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
Necessity	334	66.8%	131	26.2%	35	7%	500	1.4020
Stylish	232	46.4%	215	43%	53	10.6%	500	1.6420
Trendy	188	37.6%	205	41%	107	21.4%	500	1.8380



Graph 4: Level of Agreement Regarding the Importance of Personal Care Products

It is found in the table 4 that according to 66.8% of women personal care products is Necessity; according to 46.4% of women it is stylish and trendy according to 37.6% women. While according to 7% respondents personal care products are not the necessity, not stylish according to 10.6% respondents and nor trendy according to 21.4% respondents. Other respondents were not clear about her opinion as found in the study.

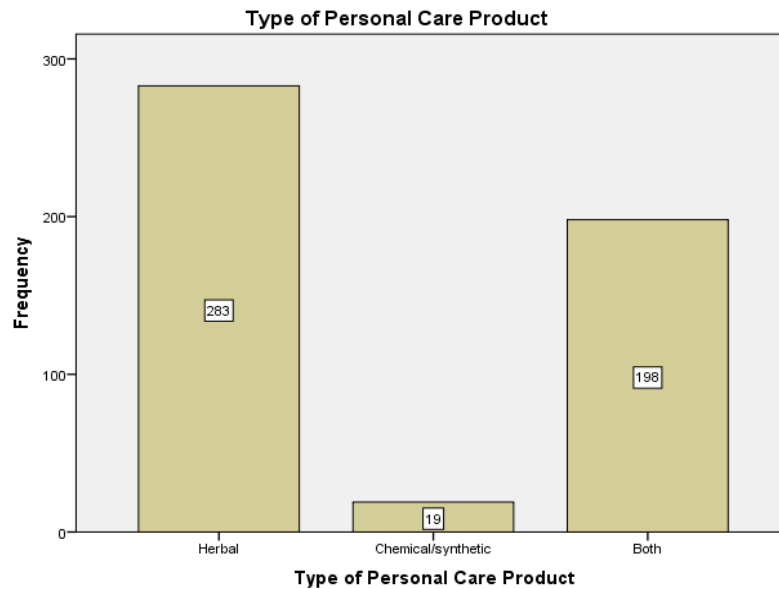
From the above, it is found that the majority of women buy Personal Care Product because of Changing lifestyle and also their previous experiences associated with such product. Respondents were using personal care products for more than 5 years and their interest varies according to individual nature. Personal Care Products are considered as a Necessity by most of the women.

Preference of Personal Care Product

Females are mostly concerned about their skin and look found in various studies so in case of Personal care product also it is desirable to know that weather their preference is towards the natural and herbal cosmetic or not as there is a shift in buying behavior towards the herbal and natural product.

Table 5: Preference of Personal Care Product

Preference of Personal Care Product	Frequency	Percent
Herbal	283	56.6
Chemical/synthetic	19	3.8
Both	198	39.6
Total	500	100.0

**Graph 5: Preference of Personal Care Product**

It is clear from the table 5 that 56.6% respondent preferred herbal Personal care Products. Only 3.8% respondent preferred chemical/synthetic Personal care Products. And 39.6% respondent preferred both herbal and chemical/synthetic Personal care Products. It may be due to the respondent felt that these natural products can increase their physical appearance in a better way as compared to product from the synthetic origin.

Product Categories Purchased by Respondent

In the case of Personal care, there are various categories of products. For identifying the usage of the particular product by the women respondent it has been categorized into five categories that are Healthcare, Soaps, Haircare, Baby care, and Bath and Body. Individual buying of product in each category is determined.

In Health care, category four products i.e. Oral care Product, Feminine care product, body powder, and other health product were taken. Next category is soap in which four products were taken i.e hand soap, bar soap, antibacterial hand soap, and acne product. The third category is hair care in which Shampoo, conditioner, hair styling, and coloring product were taken. Fourth category was dedicated for baby product in which Baby shampoo, Baby powder, baby lotion, and other baby care product was listed and the last category is for bath and body in which body wash, bubble wash, creams and body lotion were given separately and women were to tick those products which they were using on a regular basis.

Table 6: Product Categories Purchased by Respondent

Products Categories	Products	Responses	
		N	Percent
Health Care	Using oral care product	392	8.4%
	Using femine care product	240	5.1%
	Using body powder	196	4.2%
	Using other health product	164	3.5%
Soaps	Using hand soap product	341	7.3%
	Using bar soaps	252	5.4%
	Using antibacterial hand soaps	202	4.3%
	Using acne product	149	3.2%
Hair care	Using shampoo	467	10.0%
	Using conditioner	355	7.6%
	Using hair styling product	140	3.0%
	Using colouring product	192	4.1%
Baby care	Using baby shampoo	128	2.7%
	Using baby soap product	151	3.2%
	Using baby lotion	154	3.3%
	Using Other baby care product	167	3.6%
Bath and Body	Using body wash	298	6.4%
	Using bubble wash	69	1.5%
	Using creams	231	4.9%
	Using body lotion and cream	395	8.4%
Total		4683	100.0%

Table 6 shows that Shampoo is used by 467 respondent, Body lotions and creams 395 respondent, Oral care 392, Conditioner 355, hand soaps 341, Body wash 298, Bar soaps 252, feminine products 240, creams used by 231. Likewise, details of other products are given in the table. The product which is used very little by women in semi-urban areas is bubble wash used by only 69 women.

Thus it is found that in Health Care Product category Oral care Product are mostly purchased by women respondents. In case of soaps, Hand soap is mostly purchased by women respondents. As far as Hair care Products are considered shampoo is purchased mostly. For Baby Care Product category Baby care products purchased by women but their number is less as compared to other product categories. It may be used by only families having a baby. Lastly in the case of Bath and Body Lotions and creams are used mostly by women.

FINDINGS OE STUDY

- It is found from the study that 28.6% of women use personal care products due to Changing lifestyle, 25.2% is due to previous experience, 19.3% is due to the easy availability of such products, 10.6% is due to corporate culture, 9.5% is due to media exposure and 6.7% is due to an increase in disposable income.
- Further, it is found that 55% women purchase Personal care Products over the long period of time, 29.2% women purchases Personal care Products from last 5 years, 10.4% women purchases Personal care Products between 1-5 years and 5.4% women recently purchases Personal care Products.
- Results of the study show 45% women are fairly interested, 38% of women are very much interested, 12% are somewhat interested and only 4% are not interested at all in personal care products.
- It is also clear that 66.8% of respondents perceive personal care products as Necessity, 46.4% as stylish and Trendy as per 37.6% respondents.

- According to study 56.6% respondent preferred herbal Personal care Products, Only 3.8% respondent preferred chemical/synthetic Personal care Products. And 39.6% respondent preferred both herbal and chemical/synthetic Personal care Products
- Also it was found that Oral care Products are mostly purchased in Health Care Product, Hand soap in case of soaps, Shampoo in Haircare Products, Other Baby Care Products in Baby care products but there number is less as compared to other product category. It may be used by only families having baby and Lotions and creams in Bath and Body product category.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

With the help of findings of the study, I conclude that Women in semi-urban areas are not lagging behind with her counterparts living in different urban areas of the country. She has concern for self and her buying decision can greatly influence the market. Although it was found that women purchase Personal care product over a long period of time as it was considered as necessity purchase item so it becomes a routine purchase item. But the usage of personal care products is influenced by the changing consumption pattern due to varying life-styles by the different sections of the society and media exposure.

Although the market is filled with a variety of brands and endless products from herbal, synthetic and mixture of both type of products. But the inclination of women is more towards the natural or herbal products. Women are purchasing different category of products which satisfy her varying needs but the demand for basic product is more when compared with other products. So marketers must focus on such products which satisfy the basic needs of women. Marketers and manufacturers must realize, understand and recognize her unfulfilled needs of women and satisfy them.

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